

1. A spill shield assembly for a refuse collection vehicle, said vehicle having:
    - (a) a refuse collection compartment that is defined in part by a pair of side walls;
    - (b) a refuse storage compartment that is located adjacent to the refuse collection compartment;
    - (c) a packer ram assembly including:
      - (i) a packer face plate;
      - (ii) a force-applying mechanism that is adapted to move the packer face plate across at least a substantial portion of the collection compartment between a forward position in which the packer face plate is disposed at the side of the collection compartment opposite the storage compartment and a rearward position in which the packer face plate is disposed adjacent to the storage compartment;
- said spill shield assembly comprising:
- (d) a slide panel assembly comprising a front slide panel and a rear slide panel, wherein one of the front and rear slide panels is adapted to slide over the other between an extended position in which the slide panels have no more than a small amount of overlap and are disposed in a generally horizontal position when the packer face plate is in a rearward position and a retracted position in which the slide panels are significantly overlapped and are disposed at an angle so as to direct any material falling thereon into the collection compartment when the packer face plate is in a forward position.

2. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 which includes a support for the rear slide panel in the extended position, which support is mounted to the packer face plate.
3. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 wherein the front slide panel includes a guide and the rear slide panel includes a receiver and the guide is adapted to engage with and slide within the receiver of the rear slide panel as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position.
4. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 wherein the rear slide panel is pivotally attached to the top of the packer face plate.
5. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 wherein both the front and rear slide panels are provided with elastomeric sealing gaskets on each side, which gaskets engage and slide along the side walls of the collection compartment as the slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position.
6. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 wherein the force-applying mechanism comprises a hydraulic cylinder.
7. The spill shield assembly of claim 1 which includes an upstanding dam mounted on the front slide panel.

8. A spill shield assembly for a refuse collection vehicle, said vehicle having:
    - (a) a refuse collection compartment that is defined in part by a pair of side walls;
    - (b) a refuse storage compartment that is located adjacent to the refuse collection compartment;
    - (c) a packer ram assembly including:
      - (i) a packer face plate;
      - (ii) a force-applying mechanism that is adapted to move the packer face plate across at least a substantial portion of the collection compartment between a forward position in which the packer face plate is disposed at the side of the collection compartment opposite the storage compartment and a rearward position in which the packer face plate is disposed adjacent to the storage compartment;
- said spill shield assembly comprising:
- (d) a slide panel assembly comprising a front slide panel and a rear slide panel, wherein one of the front and rear slide panels is adapted to slide over the other between an extended position in which the slide panels have no more than a small amount of overlap and a retracted position in which the slide panels are significantly overlapped;
  - (e) a ramp which is mounted on the forward side of the collection compartment;
  - (f) a front roller which is attached to the front slide panel and adapted to engage the ramp as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position;

(g) a link having a front end and a rear end, wherein the front end of the link is pivotally attached to the front slide panel and the rear end of the link is pivotally attached to the packer face plate;

wherein the link, the front roller and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panel assembly is in the retracted position; and wherein the link, the front roller and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the rearward position, the slide panel assembly is in the extended position and covers a substantial portion of the top of the collection compartment forward of the packer face plate.

9. The spill shield assembly of claim 8 wherein:

(a) the vehicle includes a front-mounted container-lifting assembly which is adapted to lift a container into a position over the collection compartment so that the contents of the container may be dumped into the collection compartment; and

(b) the link, the front roller and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panel assembly does not interfere with the movement of the container-lifting assembly or the dumping of refuse from the container.

10. The spill shield assembly of claim 8 wherein the front slide panel is adapted to slide over the rear slide panel between an extended position in which the front slide panel has no more than a small amount of overlap over the rear slide panel and a retracted position in which the front slide panel significantly overlaps the rear slide panel.

11. The spill shield assembly of claim 8 wherein the link comprises a front component and a rear component and wherein the front component is generally horizontally disposed and the rear component is generally disposed at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal when the slide panels are in the extended position.
12. The spill shield assembly of claim 8 which includes a rear roller which is attached to the link, which roller is adapted to engage the ramp as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position, wherein the link, the front and rear rollers and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panel assembly is in the retracted position, and wherein the link, the front and rear rollers and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the rearward position, the slide panel assembly is in the extended position and covers a substantial portion of the top of the collection compartment forward of the packer face plate.
13. The spill shield assembly of claim 12 wherein the link, the front and rear rollers and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panels are disposed at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal in the retracted position.
14. The spill shield assembly of claim 12 wherein the link, the front and rear rollers and the ramp are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the rearward position, the slide panels are disposed substantially horizontally in the extended position.

15. The spill shield assembly of claim 8 which includes:
  - (a) a pair of ramps, one of which is attached to each side of the walls of the collection compartment;
  - (b) a pair of front rollers which are attached to the front slide panel and adapted to engage the ramps as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position;
  - (c) a pair of links, each having a front end and a rear end, wherein the front end of each link is pivotally attached to the front slide panel and the rear end of each link is pivotally attached to the packer face plate.
16. The spill shield assembly of claim 15 which includes a pair of brackets, one of which is attached at each side of the forward end of the front slide panel, with each of said brackets being provided:
  - (a) for attachment of a front roller thereto so that by such attachment, the front roller is attached to the front slide panel;
  - (b) for pivotal attachment of the front end of a link thereto behind the front roller so that by such attachment, the front end of the link is attached to the front slide panel.
17. The spill shield assembly of claim 15 wherein the ramps are disposed at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal.

18. A spill shield assembly for a refuse collection vehicle, said vehicle having:
- (a) a refuse collection compartment that is defined in part by a pair of side walls;
  - (b) a refuse storage compartment that is located adjacent to the refuse collection compartment;
  - (c) a container-lifting assembly which is adapted to lift a container into a position over the collection compartment so that the contents of the container may be dumped into the collection compartment;
  - (d) a packer ram assembly including:
    - (i) a packer face plate;
    - (ii) a hydraulic cylinder that is adapted to move the packer face plate across at least a substantial portion of the collection compartment between a forward position in which the packer face plate is disposed at the side of the collection compartment opposite the storage compartment and a rearward position in which the packer face plate is disposed adjacent to the storage compartment;
- said spill shield assembly comprising:
- (e) a slide panel assembly comprising:
    - (i) a rear slide panel which is pivotally mounted to the top of the packer face plate and which includes a guide receiver; and
    - (ii) a front slide panel which includes a guide that is adapted to engage with and slide within the receiver of the rear slide panel, so that the front slide panel slides over the rear slide panel between an extended position in

- which the slide panels have no more than a small amount of overlap and a retracted position in which the slide panels are significantly overlapped;
- (f) a pair of brackets, one of which is attached at each side of the forward end of the front slide panel;
  - (g) a pair of ramps, one of which is attached to each of the side walls of the collection compartment;
  - (h) a pair of front rollers, one of which is attached to each bracket so that each roller engages the ramps as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position;
  - (i) a pair of links, each having a front end and a rear end, wherein the front end of each link is pivotally attached to one of the brackets behind the front roller and the rear end of each link is pivotally attached to the packer face plate;
  - (j) a pair of rear rollers, one of which is attached to each link, which rollers are adapted to engage the ramps as the front and rear slide panels move between the extended position and the retracted position;

wherein the links, the front and rear rollers and the ramps are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panel assembly is in the retracted position and does not interfere with the movement of the container-lifting assembly or the dumping of refuse from the container; and

wherein the links, the front and rear rollers and the ramps are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the rearward position, the slide panel assembly is in the extended position and covers a substantial portion of the top of the collection compartment forward of the packer face plate.

19. The spill shield assembly of claim 18 wherein the links, the front and rear rollers and the ramps are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the forward position, the slide panels are disposed at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal in the retracted position.
  
20. The spill shield assembly of claim 18 wherein each of the links comprises a front component and a rear component and wherein the links, the front and rear rollers and the ramps are arranged so that when the packer face plate is in the rearward position, the slide panels are generally horizontally disposed in the extended position with the front component generally horizontally disposed and the rear component generally disposed at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal.